

LOGNOTE -- Chief, Operations Group, 6 May 1985

1. (Williams) I asked [] for some background on the 26 April Kohl speech on Bitburg which had taken 8 1/2 hours to reach the Wire. He was quite familiar with the incident and presumably was expecting a question. He said the speech was very difficult for them as it was impromptu and they had no "text," as was customary for a Chancellor's speech. Kohl had completed a long speech to the Bundestag on economic affairs and had sat down. After a pause he got up again and resumed speaking for 29 minutes, this time on the subject of Bitburg. [] quite properly handled the Bitburg section as an out-of-turn excerpt but was hampered by lack of text and that they had not anticipated the speech and had only a poor recording. There were few translators on duty and the speech was given to a very senior man who had trouble with Kohl's southern accented German, in a very emotional speech using language rarely encountered in formal speeches. I also asked about the amount of time the speech had taken to clear [] wire. [] said they had only one or two teletypists who could handle English teletyping and that it had to be done very slowly. He said most of the blame had to fall on the Monitoring Service, not on the teletype section. He added that, unfortunately, he could not guarantee that in similar circumstances the same thing might not happen again. But, he said, there were lessons to be learned and they would review and study the handling of this speech.

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(cc: D/FBIS, C/DRD, AC/WSS, []
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